

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
THURSDAY,  
May 15, 2003

CONTACT: JEAN BRANSCUM  
ICCW Chair  
406/444-4521

### **MONTANA EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARDS**

Today, the State of Montana Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee for Women (ICCW) honored the recipients of the Montana Excellence in Leadership Awards 2003 at a ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda in Helena. Governor Judy Martz presented the awards assisted by Jean Branscum, ICCW Chair.

“These awards are for those who have shown exemplary leadership in addressing issues for women,” said Governor Judy Martz. “It’s inspirational to see women personally project and realize the importance of opening doors of opportunity for other women to move up the career ladder.”

The Montana Excellence in Leadership Awards is a statewide award established to honor three individuals for either their exemplary leadership and achievements, or for their outstanding efforts to assist women to excel in the workplace. Recipients of this year’s award in the three categories are:

- **A WOMAN IN STATE GOVERNMENT**

**Wendy Keating, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Industry, Helena**

Wendy Keating is the current Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry. Her innovative and big picture thinking has effectively shaped the department into one of the most respected agencies in state government today. She has also gained national recognition as a dynamic change agent as she has challenged existing procedures and policies obsolete for today’s users of the workforce system. “In the truest sense of mentorship, Wendy has dedicated years to mentoring and molding leaders,” stated Kelly Chapman and Diane West in their

-more-

nomination packet. “Women seek her out because she will provide guidance that is true, honest, and focused on the individual. Wendy mentors so that she can experience the joy of watching others grow and develop, “

- **A PERSON IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

**Lieutenant T Colonel Nikki S. DeWolfe, MT Army National Guard, Helena**

Nikki DeWolfe, at her present rank of Lieutenant Colonel, has the distinguished accomplishment of being in the highest-ranking position held by a female officer since the inception of the State Militia in 1867. Nikki’s long list of achievements include: Commander of the 210<sup>th</sup> Personnel Company, the first female Commander of the 2/111th Press Camp, and she was the first female in the Montana Guard to serve as a Battalion Operations officer. She has earned numerous awards and decorations, to include the Army Achievement Medal, Army Commendation Medal and Meritorious Service Medal. In the words of Colonel Joel Cusker, Deputy Chief of Staff, Montana National Guard, “Nikki has quietly and efficiently changed the image of women in uniform in the Montana Guard.”

- **A PERSON IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

**Linda Overstreet, President, Corporate Air, Billings**

As owner and president of Corporate Air, Linda has presided over its corporate growth for the past 20 years. She has taken a small air charter service and built it into an internationally recognized aviation network. Overstreet has appointed women to key positions in her corporate organization. Women filled these positions, not because they were women, but because everyday barriers that would have encumbered their ability to be considered as a candidate for these positions, were removed. Curt Bourg, Vice President of Administration, Corporate Air, who nominated her, said “Linda is a model leader for women in Montana who are interested in achievement in the private sector.”

Bearing Point and Wells Fargo Bank, Helena jointly sponsored this year’s ceremony and awards.